

MINING LAWS AS SUBMITTED.

SYNOPSIS OF BILLS INTRODUCED IN STATE LEGISLATURE.

Five Measures Have Been Introduced Which Relate Directly to the Establishment of a Mining Bureau—Another is to Impose Tax on Corporations—Representative Robbins Bill Abbreviated.

Mining legislation has apparently been commenced in real earnest at Salem, the capital city of Oregon, where the twenty-second session of the state legislature is now sitting. Up to last Monday the following bills pertaining to mining had been introduced:

H. B. by Hale, of Josephine county; H. B. by Wheldon, of Wasco county; H. B. by Eddy, of Tillamook county. Senate bills by Myers, of Multnomah county, and by Booth, of Josephine-Douglas-Lane counties.

All of the above measures, except Mr. Eddy's bill, provide for an act for the establishment, maintenance and support of a Bureau of Mines to be known as the "Bureau of Mines of the State of Oregon;" for the appointment of a board of governors and for the duties and powers thereof; for the appointment of a commissioner of mines and deputies, and to define their duties and powers; to promote and encourage the collection of minerals and mineral products to be used in the mineral exhibit of the Lewis & Clark Centennial and American Pacific Exposition and Oriental Fair; to promote the mineral resources of the State of Oregon, and to make appropriations for and provide for the maintenance of such bureau of mines.

The bill of Mr. Eddy simply provides for a license or franchise tax on all incorporated companies doing business in the state; such as domestic corporations, foreign corporations, joint stock companies and associations. It provides that every corporation hereafter organized or formed for profit under, by or pursuant to law in this state, shall pay the secretary of state, upon presentation of its articles of incorporation for filing, an organization tax of one-tenth of one per centum on the first \$100,000 or fraction thereof, and one-half of said rate on its capital stock above \$100,000. In no case shall the fee be less than \$25. All incorporated companies not exceeding \$50,000 shall pay an annual license tax of \$20. Exceeding \$100,000 and not over \$500,000, to pay a tax of \$40. Not exceeding \$1,000,000 shall pay \$50 and any company that shall exceed \$1,000,000 capitalization shall pay an annual license tax of \$100. The foregoing is about all this bill contains which would affect mining corporations.

The other bills are brief even to the preamble, the one used in this article is copied from Hon. J. H. Robbins' bill, as it covers more thoroughly the objects for which such legislation is intended. Each and every bill provides that Portland shall be the headquarters of the proposed bureau of mines; and Senator Myers goes so far as to name five residents of that city, who, on the passage of his measure, shall be the first members of the board.

Representative J. H. Robbins' bill is a voluminous affair, consisting of twenty-eight sections; some of which are divided into subsections, showing that its framer has gone into every subject with the most minute detail.

Section 1 is hereby given in full:

"There shall be and is hereby established in this state a department to be known as the Bureau of Mines of the State of Oregon, the principal office of which shall be maintained in the city of Portland, Oregon."

Section 2 provides that the board of governors shall be constituted a corporation, with all the powers of a body of that kind, and shall consist of five members, to be appointed by the governor. They shall be resident citizens of Oregon, not more than three members of which shall be of the same political party, and a majority of them shall at the time of their appointment have for their occupation that of mining. They shall hold their office from one to five years, the tenure to be decided by lot. Section 3 appears to have been inadvertently omitted from the copy furnished this office.

Section 4 defines the duty of the board and section 5 provides for the appointment of a Commissioner of Mines "Who shall have had at least seven years practical experience in mining, together with a practical and scientific knowledge of mining, metallurgy and geology." The form of oath required from such officer is also given and the party shall give a bond of \$10,000. The salary not to exceed \$250 per month; traveling expenses of \$1000 per annum are allowed. Section 6 empowers the board to provide an office, furniture, mineral exhibits, library, chemical laboratory and such other appliances as may be necessary. This section also provides for the calling of extra meetings.

Section 7 empowers the board to "appoint two inspectors of practical experience in mining, citizens of the United States, and legal voters of the State of Oregon, and having had not less than seven years practical experience in mining in the State of Oregon," who shall hold their office for the term of two years. A clerk must also be appointed who shall act as assistant curator for the state mineral collection. Other competent persons may be appointed as required. Bonds of \$5000 each shall be filed by the two inspectors and the clerk. Section 8 defines the duties of the inspectors, but as this matter is more fully given farther on, it will not be copied here.

Section 9 describes how to appoint deputy inspectors and assistants, while section 10 is to the effect that the office of the bureau shall be a public one. Section 11 relates to the collection of minerals for exhibition purposes and of data on all modern methods of mining, electrical and other powers, etc.

Section 12 defines the duties of the commissioner of mines, inspectors, etc., and prescribes a penalty of not less than \$500 or more than \$5000 with imprisonment in the state penitentiary of from one to three years for any violation of the duties imposed upon them.

Section 13 concerns the reports which the commissioner of mines shall make biennially to the governor of the state and outlines what these reports shall be.

Section 14 is herewith given in its entirety: "Every owner, agent, manager or lessee of any metalliferous mine or metallurgical plant in this state, shall admit the commissioner or inspector on the exhibition of his certificate of appointment, for the purpose of making examination and inspection provided for in this act, whenever the mine or plant is in operation and render any necessary assistance for such inspection. But said commissioner or inspector shall not unnecessarily obstruct the working of said mine or plant. The refusal of the owner, agent, manager or lessee to admit the commissioner or inspector to such mine or plant to lawfully inspect the same, shall, upon conviction, be deemed a misdemeanor, and shall be subject to a fine of not less than \$50 nor more than \$300, or be imprisoned not

less than one, nor more than three months, or by both such fine and imprisonment."

Section 15 again defines the duties of any officer who finds that the owner, agent or lessee of any mine or plant refuses permission as set forth in the preceding section.

Section 16, prohibits any officer in the employ of the bureau from in any manner disclosing information of any character that he may acquire in his or their examinations except to the properly qualified persons; and imposes a fine in any sum not less than \$1000 nor more than \$5000 for such violation.

Sections 17 and 18, define the duties of mine and mill owners etc., regarding information as to their mines and plants and as to reports of accidents in their different works. The penalty for not complying with the provisions being from \$50 to \$300. Section 19 places the salaries of inspectors at no more than \$1500 per year with traveling expenses not to exceed \$1000. Also that the clerk or assistant curators salary shall not exceed \$1200 per annum. The board of governors to receive no compensation for their services other than necessary traveling expenses while in attendance at meetings of the board. Sections 20 and 21, again defines duties of the board of governors.

Section 22, has twenty seven subsections, and is of such great length, that it would be impossible to give more than a mere synopsis here. It commences with regulations regarding explosives and combustible substances. Defines how much shall be kept on hand at anyone time, and that all buildings containing such shall be at a safe distance apart.

The use of steel or iron tamping bars shall not be allowed. No one under eighteen years of age, nor the user of intoxicating liquors shall be employed as hoisting engineer. All hoists shall be equipped with indicators. A man to be known as a "cager" shall be employed on all cages and skips.

The commissioner of mines shall establish a uniform code of signals. All mines having but one exit, and the same covered with a building, shall have fire protection. All persons are prohibited from riding upon any cage, skip or bucket when loaded except when necessary, and then upon special signal. Giving false signals shall be considered a misdemeanor. All shafts more than fifty feet in depth, with a hoist, shall be divided into two compartments, one of which shall be a ladder way, describes how ladders shall be made and how placed in shafts, winzes etc.

Shafts equipped with buildings and machinery, with only one shaft or exit shall be divided into two compartments, one of which shall be tightly partitioned off and used as a ladder way. All tunnels and adit levels at safe distance from the mouth shall connect with the surface by ladderways. Employees sinking shaft or incline shall be provided with chain or ladder so arranged so as to insure safe means of exit. All shafts collars shall be covered and so arranged that persons or foreign objects cannot fall into the shaft. Cages must be provided with bonnets and safety clutches.

All stations or levels, when practicable, shall have a passage-way around the working shaft. Guard rails shall be placed across the shaft in front of a level. Where a shaft is sunk on a vein, a pillar of ground shall be left standing on each side of the shaft. All abandoned shafts, pits or other excavations shall be securely covered or fenced.

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All persons working any mine or mill employing five or more men shall report same on or before December 1st of each year, giving in detail the occupation of each person etc. That strangers or visitors are not allowed under ground unless some one is deputized to accompany them. The maximum number of men to ride on any cage, skip or bucket, shall be posted at collar of shaft and at each level. The commissioner of mines or the inspectors have the power to appear at Coroners inquests, compel the attendance of witnesses and cross question the same in case of fatal accidents in mines, mills or metallurgical works. Penalties for all violations of this section are fully set forth.

Sections 23 to 28 inclusive, give in detail duties of officers. Appropriates the sum of \$10,000 per year for the maintenance of the bureau and provides for gifts to the same.

There is a provision that fifty per cent of all moneys hereafter to be collected and received by the state as a license fee or franchise tax from corporations organized for the purpose of engaging in mining, smelting or the reduction of ores, is appropriated for the purpose of maintenance of the bureau of mines of the State of Oregon.

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